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The Miracle of Dogwood and other Poems

By

VIRGINIA CUMMINGS



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V.P.L.

LANGUAGE AND
LITERATURE

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To my good friend
Mary Bolma
with best regards
Virginia Cummings.

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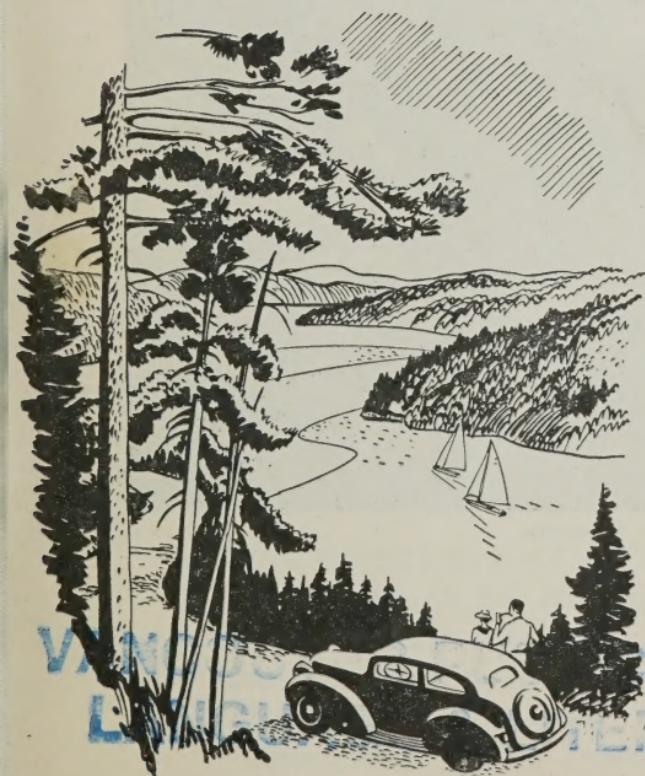
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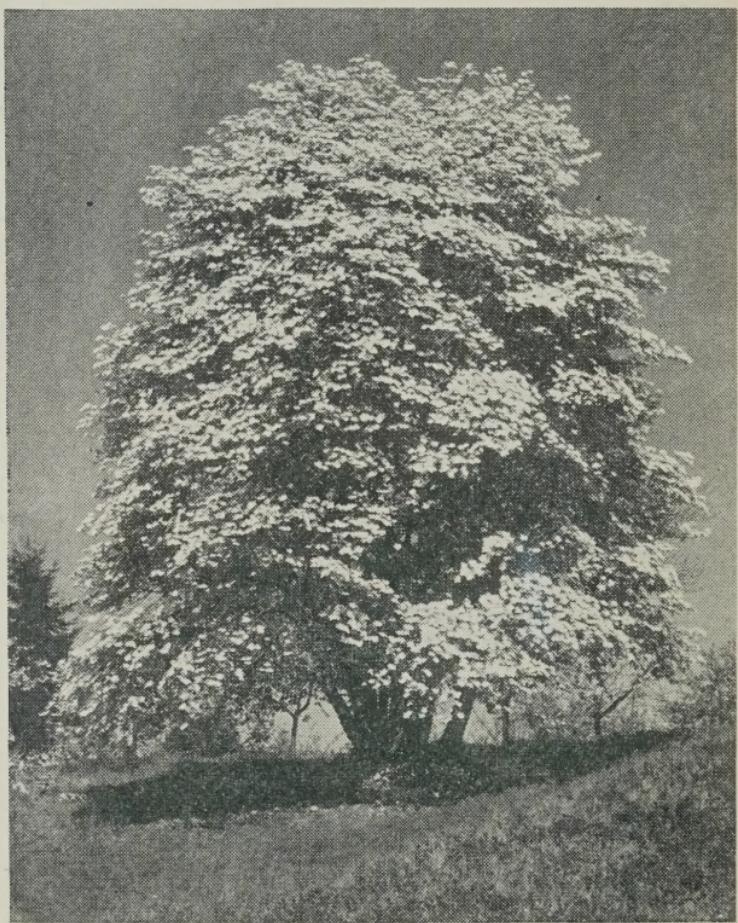
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TERRITORY





DOGWOOD TREE IN BLOSSOM

V. I.

The Miracle of Dogwood

Whence comes the dogwood?

*Last night it was not there;
Now, ghost-like and fragile,
It floats on the air.*

*Against the dark forest
It floats on the air
Like a star-web descended,
Like snowflakes suspended,
Like a nun with knees bended,
Breathing visible prayer.*

*As a transparent fluid
To crystals has quickened
So this vacuous air
Into blossom has thickened.*

*My life was a forest
Dark with despair
Hope imperceptible
Clouded with care.*

*Out of invisible
Nothingness, here,
My heart's best desire,
Like the dogwood's white fire,
Like the crystals' sharp spire,
Stands forth, tangible, clear.*

*Faith renews as each season
There floats on the air
This star-web descended,
Like snowflakes suspended,
Like a nun with knees bended
Breathing visible prayer.*

To a Daughter

*Waking or sleeping, night or day,
Bowed with sorrow, or blithe and gay,
Ever the thought of you I keep
In my heart's inmost recess deep.
Ever your image floats between
Me and pleasure's fairest mien.
Keen as you feel your pain or fret,
There's one who feels it keener yet.
You are another self to me,
Dearer than self could ever be.*



Portrait of a Happy Woman

*As she moves beneath the trees
Little children, shrilling laughter,
Racing back and tumbling after,
Wrap themselves about her knees.*

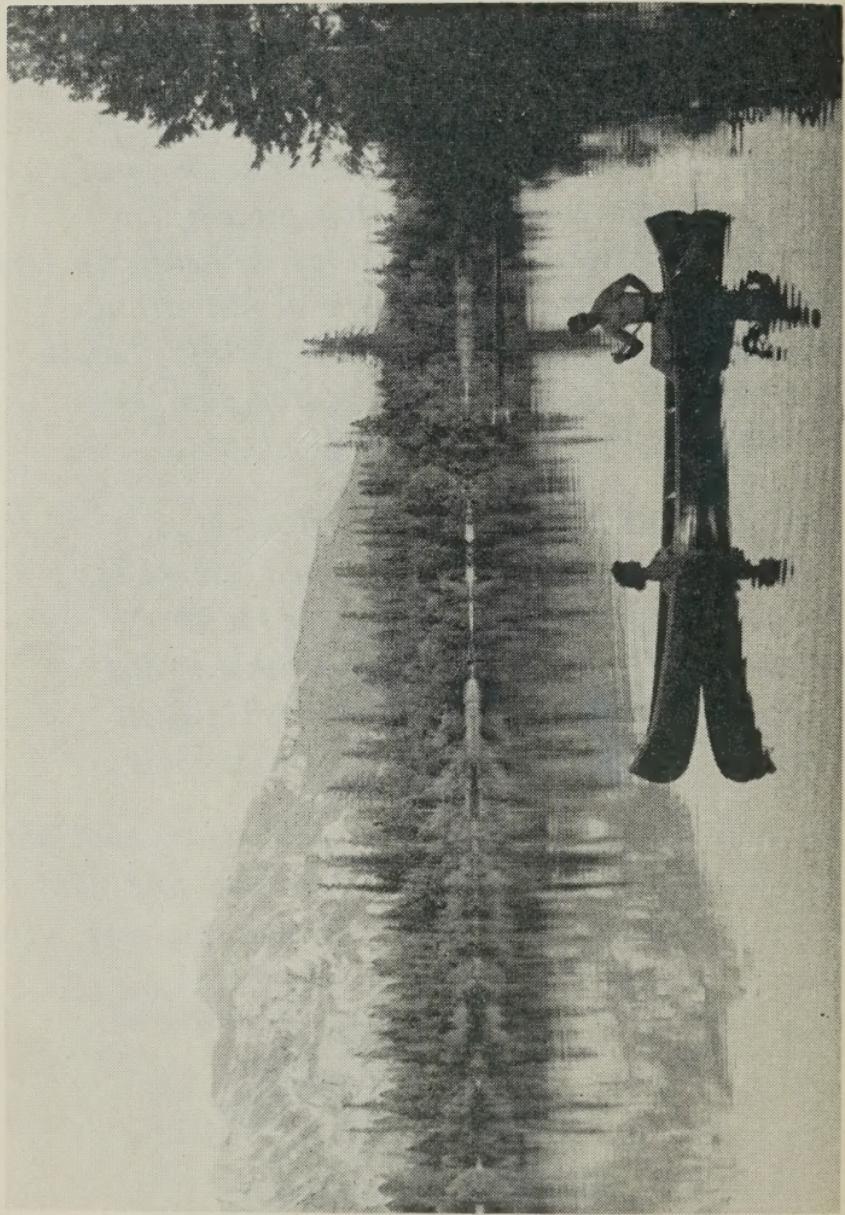
Florence's Garden

*I know a slope where grows a garden fair
(Never were flowers tended with such care!)
A wisp of lawn, a weeping birch, an urn
Silvered with sunshine, blossoms twined with fern.
Over the urn's grey rim hang vines in strands
Reaching and fluttering, frail as babies' hands.
So riotous is the bloom one scarce can see
It veils a tiny mound beneath the tree.*

*Encircling all are mountains, silver-grey,
God's urn, the hollow of His hand, where lay
His garden, over which with care He threw
A curtain, His own cloud-besprinkled blue.
At blossom-time from out His urn He drew
Florence, the fairest flower of all that grew.*

*Oh, little white flower of God's! Oh, tears that burn
Hotter than flame, on tended mound and urn!
A shrine has grown amidst your garden, rare,
A bit of every heart in town lies there!*





MCBAIN LAKE, EAST KOOTENAY, B.C.

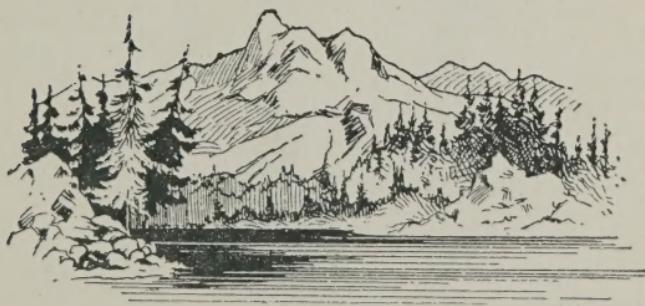
ON THE SUNSET SIDE OF THE GREAT DIVIDE

The Great Divide

*There lies on the sunset side
Of the Rockies' Great Divide
A valley Nature fain would hide.*

*There, where mingled peak and pine
Breathe an air like golden wine,
Comes the heart as to a shrine.*

*Like the sloping shadows pressed
To the mountain's sun-warmed breast,
Mortal care is stilled to rest.*





BY THE LONG WASH OF ENGLISH BAY

Nostalgia

*Lovely long wash of English Bay,
Though I must leave you for awhile,
I'll think of you when far away.*

*Though other memories fail to stay,
Your calm expanse, mile on green mile,
By the long wash of English Bay,*

*Patterned with sea-gull, sail and spray,
In foreign climes will bring a smile,
I'll think of you when far away.*

*My wanderlust you might allay,
Though tug of other tides beguile,
O surging surf of English Bay!*

*When storied lands my hopes betray,
Tear-dimmed, your waters volatile
Will come to me when far away,
Lovely long wash of English Bay!*

Golden Wedding

*Leader of a town's destiny
And lode-star of its Fate,
You stand to-day on life's pathway
Before Time's Golden Gate!*

*Europe, Eurasia or Africa,
No place you have not seen on land or foam,
Yet loving best our glorious Canada
You left them all, and to her hills came home.*

*For half a cycle you and your life's chum
Have looked on life from peaks above the clouds;
Have walked the valley with the moiling crowds;
Of all your days the best are yet to come.*

*After midday the sun to earth is nearer,
It's light upon the craggy steeps is clearer.
Life's afternoon too brings a richer glow,
Wisdom and truth may then more lucid show.*

*At evening day reaches its full flower.
The mountains, in the morning grey, austere,
At eve a dream of rose and mauve appear.
Worth all the rest, that one resplendent hour!*

*God grant you a long evening, calm and sweet;
Upon your head friends' smiles, like golden haze,
Making a halo of the sun's last rays;
The rainbow of their love about your feet!*

*Leader of a town's destiny
And lode-star of its Fate,
You stand today on life's pathway
Before Time's Golden Gate!*

Hoar Frost

Here a silver birchen tree
Grows beside the silver sea.

Misty green of early spring
Filmed it over—an elfin thing

Festooned around my lighted pane
Like a cob-web in the rain.



Then a full-grown garb of green
Hid its shapely silver sheen.

Late, a coat of autumn gold
Wrapped the silver, fold on fold.

Blight of winter stripped it soon:
Bare black limbs against the moon.

All its life-spark in the night
Faded with the fading light.

But the hoar-frost of the dawn
Brings fresh beauty newly drawn.

Fairy fret-work on the tree
Is etched in silver filigree.



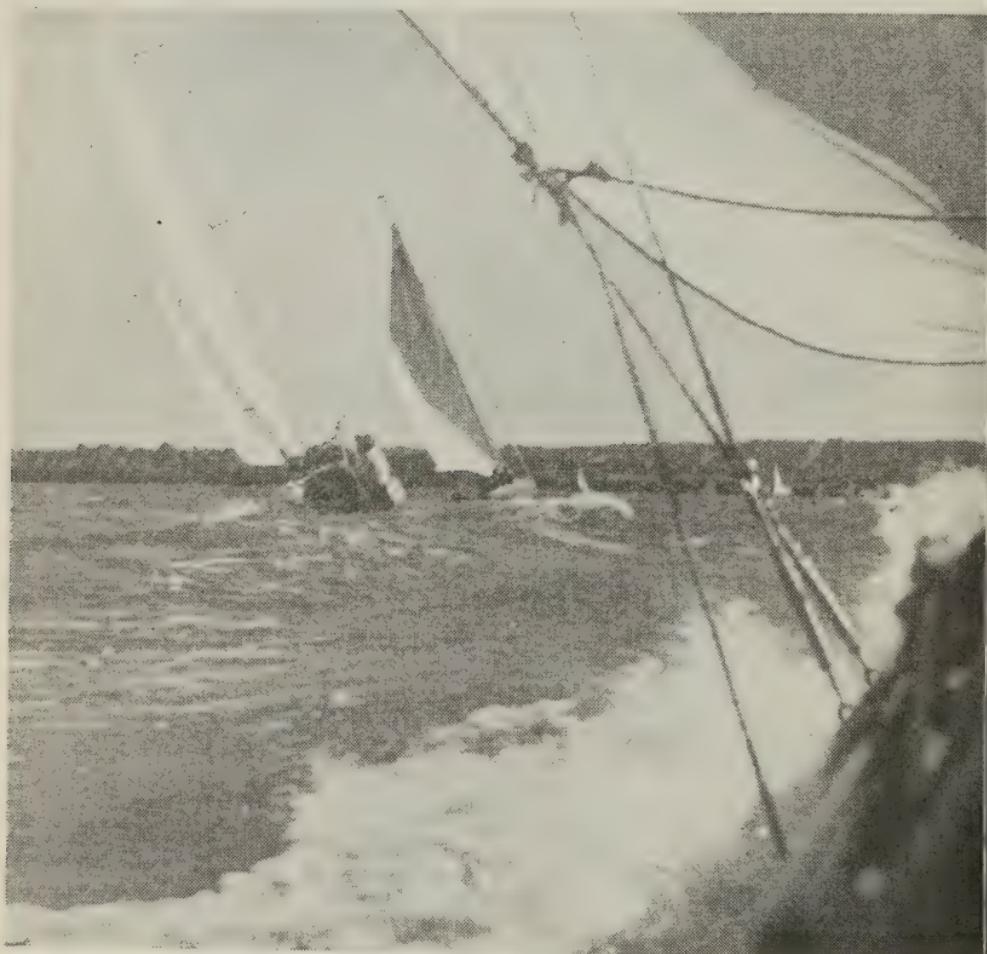
Now its soul so long concealed
By the hoar-frost is revealed,

Frescoed twig and lacy bough
Never so beautiful as now.

Intricacies new unroll,
Pattern of its silver soul.

Thus my life when searing blight
Stole upon it in the night.

Heavy hoar-frost on my heart
Have you beauty to impart?



PATTERED WITH SEA-GULL, SAIL AND SPRAY

Oh Love, My Heart Is Unafraid

*Howe Sound is drenched with violet mist,
The sky is orange-hued,
The Lions' heads are crystal-kissed,
The vale with rose imbued.*

*The fountain's spray has caught the gleam
And weaves a rainbow spell,
Across the wave the lighthouse beam
Throbs out: "All's well! All's well!"*

*The hills are pleated round the sea
Fold upon purple fold,
So, too, your arms will shelter me
Though winds of Fate blow cold.*

*Oh Love, my heart is unafraid
Although we face the night:
HE must have all provision made
Who thrills our souls with light!*

Absent Yachtsman

*I saw your runaway "flattie"
Wind-bent for the open sea!
She straight was told to fill her hold
With love, to you from me.*

*But at dusk your droop-winged "flattie"
Rode anchor on English Bay.
Now, on boat or brine, no sun will shine
Till her skipper comes home to stay!*



Parting

*As the moon trembled over the water,
So quivered his kiss in her hair.
He, out of the solitude, sought her
And mingled her tears with his prayer.*

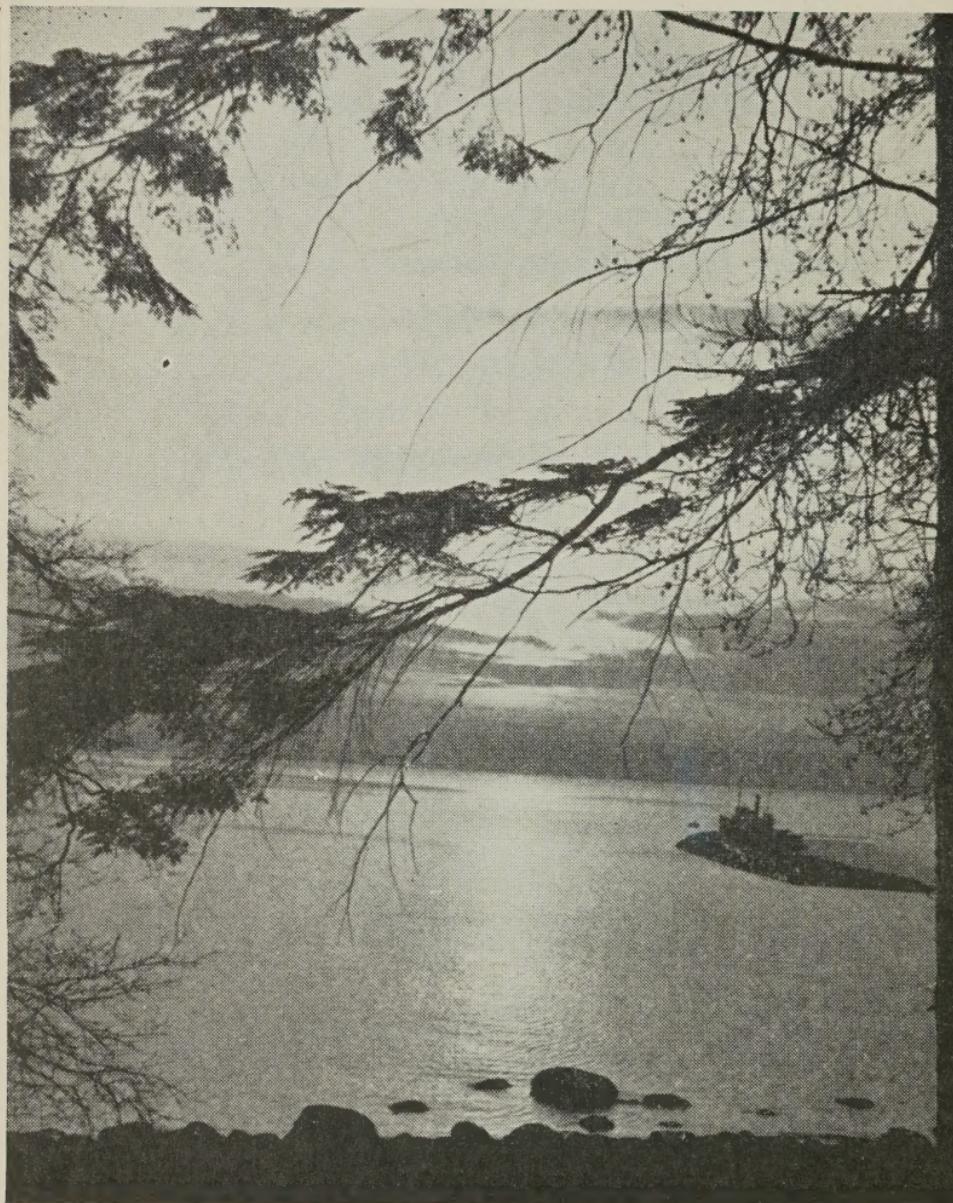
Christmas Greeting

*At this gracious Noel-tide
Sweeter than all joys beside
Is to know, whatever betide,
I have a friend in you.*

*Stretching yearning thoughts between
As the swift days intervene,
With you in spirit, though unseen,
Friend o' my heart, I'm true.*

*You and yours with faith and peace,
Love and friendship that increase,
Beauty's thrill without surcease,
Sweet Noel-tide endue.*





AT EVENTIDE

